

CD Review



Bush
"Razorblade Suitcase"
Interscope Records
Grade: B-

After being on the road for two years, Bush returned with a little extra luggage. And you won't believe what's inside.

Bush's sophomore effort, "Razorblade Suitcase," is an extension of what made their debut album so popular. The same nonsensical poetry and screaming guitar riffs that boosted "Sixteen Stone" to the top of the charts return but with a different goal in mind—credibility.

Gavin Rossdale and company, hailing from a little town called Shepherd's Bush, search for that which eluded

them in previous efforts. However, what they do gain in artistic style points is squandered on mainstream audiences. The album's mellow facade gives a first impression of redundancy and "Green Day Syndrome." With some time, love and tenderness, "Razorblade" slowly reveals itself to careful listeners.

The first single, "Swallowed," has been reigning at No. 1 for three consecutive weeks on Billboard's Modern Rock tracks, replacing "What I Got" from Sublime. Put simply, it could have been a b-side from "Stone," with Nigel Pulsford's power chords and Rossdale's harsh, yet soothing vocals.

The disc intros with Winston (Rossdale's dog) panting and growling, to ward off any evil-doing critics. It then breaks right into the opening cut, "Personal Holloway," a strong yet predictable collage of slashing guitars and a clever chorus.

Blatant contradictions and paradoxes comprise Rossdale's lyrics in this album. Following the patented Seattle loud-quiet-loud formula, it has strong single prospects.

Capitalizing on the wide-spread success of "Glycerine" are "Bonedrive" and "Straight No Chaser," with soul-searching lyrics and sad violins. "Straight No Chaser"

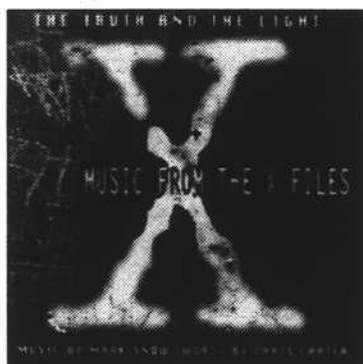
chalks one up for Rossdale in the credibility column and gives the band two more single possibilities.

Piloting the soundboard for this endeavor is Steve Albini, best known for his work on PJ Harvey's "Rid of Me" and Nirvana's "In Utero." His punk-favoring editing style shows through on songs like "A Tendency to Start Fires" and "Synapse."

As strangely as it opened, the album closes with a 61-second medley ranging from violins to feedback to a promising new song.

As to Rossdale's credibility, it's just up the road and around the bend...but he's on the right track.

— Chris Thomas



Mark Snow
"The Truth and the Light: Music from 'The X-Files'"
Warner Bros. Records
Grade: A+

Mark Snow's personal conspiracy is to make sure that the audience isn't aware of his music.

Snow, who composes between 40 and 50 minutes of music for each episode of "The X-Files," is one of those few people who knows how to hit his audience (and hit hard) just below the conscious level.

So, when "Songs in the Key of X" came out earlier this year, the fact that the only piece of Snow's music on it was the actual theme was a bit of a disappointment.

"The Truth and the Light" rectifies this in a big way. Yes, it does include the theme song, which is named "Materia Primoris: The X-Files Theme (Main Title)," but it also includes much more.

The album is nearly 50 minutes long, about the same length as an episode of the show. It is wall-to-wall music—a wall of sound, that is.

Snow's lush orchestrations, chock full of eerie strings, hollow synthesizers and noises that can't be explained, fill any episode, but they also stand

extremely well alone.

But the music isn't the only thing on "The Truth and the Light." The voices of Mulder, Scully, Skinner, Deep Throat, X, Cancer-Man and even "X-Files" creator Chris Carter litter this recording, working as another instrument in the masterful mix.

Memorizing the tracks can be a little tricky, however. The names of all 20 tracks are in Latin such as "Lamenta," "Facetus Malum," "Carmen Amatorium Ex Arcanum," and "Exoptare Ex Veritas."

While Snow's soundscapes can be called music, they almost evolve beyond that. Each track breathes with a haunting life of its own.

Some tracks embody fear, others hate. Different tracks capture the sense of being alone in the world, others the sense of despair. All, however, always contain the backdrop of the conspiracy.

That's what this is, really. A soundtrack to a conspiracy.

"The Truth and the Light" is a successful experiment in shaping sound into a solid form, something tangible that's almost real enough to scare the life out of someone.

Listen to it with the lights off, because the truth is out there.

— Cliff Hicks

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